

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE UNITED STATES EXPERIENCE IN THE
BALKANS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR
POST-CONFLICT OPERATIONS IN IRAQ**

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This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

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Report Documentation Page			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 03 MAY 2004		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED -	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The United States Experience in the Balkans and Its Implications for Post-Conflict Operations in Iraq				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Thomas Muir				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5050				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT See attached file.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 36	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Colonel Thomas M. Muir

TITLE: The United States Experience in the Balkans and its Implications for Post-Conflict Operations in Iraq

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 19 March 2004 PAGES: 36 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Post-conflict operations and their associated difficulties are not unique to the current military intervention in Iraq. During the last decade, the United States conducted post-conflict peacekeeping operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. The U.S. experience in the Balkans provides strategic lessons learned for the application of ends, ways, and means of national strategy in post-conflict peacekeeping in Iraq. This paper critically examines the ends, ways, and means of U.S. military intervention in post-conflict operations, using the two case studies of on-going peacekeeping operations in the Balkans. Despite long-term commitment of military forces, the United States has yet to achieve the strategic endstate of stable, multiethnic democracies in the Balkans. The risk of not applying lessons learned from the ends, ways, and means of the American experience in the Balkans will be that the United States, with no evident endstate or exit strategy, will win the war in Iraq, but lose the peace.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my fiancée, Lucy Miller, who has coached, shared her insights, and helped to shape much more than this research paper. And to Lauren, for her daily visits to the study and constant support.

THE UNITED STATES EXPERIENCE IN THE BALKANS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR POST-CONFLICT OPERATIONS IN IRAQ

We of today shall be judged in the future by the manner in which we meet the unprecedented responsibilities that rest upon us—not alone in winning the war but also in making certain that the opportunities for future peace and stability shall not be lost.

—Secretary of State Cordell Hull remarks to a joint session of Congress, 18 November 1943

Carl von Clausewitz theorized that “No one starts a war—or rather, no one in his sense ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it”.¹ Almost daily, we are bombarded with headlines from media outlets and strategic think tanks that decry the alleged lack of planning for post-war Iraq. Critics of the U.S. occupation of Iraq point to a lack of a strategic endstate. What is the United States strategy for post-conflict Iraq? What is the endstate? What are the measurements of effectiveness or success that define that endstate? What is the appropriate use of military force to achieve political objectives? When does the U.S. declare “victory” and redeploy its military forces from post-conflict Iraq?

Post-conflict operations and their associated difficulties are not unique to the current American military intervention in Iraq. The U.S. has expended national treasure and military forces four times over the last decade to enforce peace: twice in support of international mandates for peacekeeping operations in the Balkans and twice in support of the global war on terrorism in Afghanistan, and most recently in Iraq. U.S. military forces have yet to achieve the desired strategic endstate of stable multiethnic democracies in the Balkans. The risk of not applying those lessons learned from the Balkans will be that the U.S. will win the war in Iraq, but lose the peace—with no evident endstate or exit strategy.

This paper critically examines the use of military power as the predominant means to strategic endstates in the Balkans, its failure to achieve strategic endstates, and its application as a paradigm for the use of military force to establish multiethnic democracies. This paper evaluates the ends, ways, and means of U.S. national strategy, using the two case studies of on-going peacekeeping operations in the Balkans. Finally, this research paper will propose strategic lessons learned from military intervention in the Balkans that must be applied to post-conflict Iraq.

THE BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA EXPERIENCE

United States and European foreign policy towards Bosnia-Herzegovina has been called “the greatest collective security failure of the West since the 1930s.”² U.S. and NATO military forces entered the war-torn former Yugoslavian country of Bosnia-Herzegovina after four years of impotent debate on the use of military force to end the conflict that resulted in a humanitarian crisis of severe moral dimensions. Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a peripheral country in Europe embroiled in a multiethnic civil war, had become a vital interest of the United States. As NATO and the U.S. approach the ninth anniversary of a military commitment to peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, one can only ask—what happened?

The United States political objectives in Bosnia-Herzegovina are as outlined in the U.S.-brokered Dayton Peace Accords, or General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP). The Clinton Administration identified the national interests as follows: 1) sustaining a political settlement in Bosnia that preserves the country's territorial integrity and provides a viable future for all its peoples; 2) preventing the spread of the conflict into a broader Balkan war that could threaten both allies and the stability of new democratic states in Central and Eastern Europe; 3) stemming the destabilizing flow of refugees from the conflict; 4) halting the slaughter of innocents; and 5) helping to support NATO's central role in Europe while maintaining our role in shaping Europe's security architecture.³

U.S. military intervention in Bosnia achieved all of the objectives except one—sustaining a durable political settlement. Despite the initial, specific arguments of the George W. Bush candidacy against nation-building in the Balkans, the open-ended commitment of U.S. military forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina continues under his administration. In July 2003, President Bush stated that, “...our goal is to hasten the day when peace is self-sustaining, when local, democratically elected authorities can assume full responsibility, and when NATO's forces can go home.”⁴ In a similar manner, Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz stated that peacekeeping in the Balkans continues to be an important mission to the U.S.⁵ The ends of U.S. military intervention are a stable, democratic Bosnia-Herzegovina that is no longer a danger to regional stability. The U.S. cannot allow Bosnia to become a failed state.

The Dayton Peace Accords and subsequent U.N. Security Council Resolution 1031 formed the way or roadmap for international engagement in the “endgame” for Bosnia-Herzegovina. These documents established terms for conflict termination, international legitimacy, and a U.N. mandate for the international civil and military peacekeeping mission that followed. The Dayton Accords established unity of effort among the U.N.-led civil implementation structures, nongovernmental and international organizations, and the NATO-led

peacekeeping forces. The Office of the High Representative (OHR) and supporting international organizations such as the U.N. Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina (UNMBiH), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), were responsible for implementation of civil articles of the Accords.

However, Dayton did not establish an overlap between the mandates of the OHR and the NATO-led Implementation Force (and later, the Stabilization Force), hindering complete implementation of the Peace Accord. One high level U.N. official observed, "The Americans initially stressed purely military aspects and did not want a cohesive civilian or political authority."⁶ The limited military mandate for military forces, combined with the overwhelming early civilian implementation challenges, frustrated the international community and created, what became known in the vernacular as, the "GFAP gap" between military and civil implementation tempos. In a later review of the Dayton Accords, Richard Holbrooke acknowledges that it was a mistake for dual-responsibility of implementation and that the OHR's mandate should have been stronger.⁷

The use of military force is the predominant means for implementing the Dayton Accords and for achieving U.S. interests in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The presidential decision to use military forces in Bosnia did not come without significant domestic political risk with the polls running almost 70 percent against the idea.⁸ In a bow to congressional pressure and an election year, President Clinton placed a one year time limit on the troops' deployment. This policy reflected neither the realities of the situation on the ground, nor the ability of military power to achieve the U.S. political objective of full implementation of the Dayton Accords within the self-imposed one year limitation.

The politically-imposed exit strategy negated the critical use of measurements of effectiveness as benchmarks to achieve a strategic political end state or objective. Acknowledging the shortcomings of its initial decision, the Clinton Administration extended the U.S. military deployment to the NATO-led Stabilization Force, which has been renewed annually by presidential administrations since 1996. One consequence is that the focus of the U.S. commitment in Bosnia has gradually shifted away from the attainment of an exit strategy for military forces. Instead, the experience has reinforced the key strategic tendency of linking military force structure and missions to quantifiable measurements of effectiveness for achieving the political ends of the intervention, and of avoiding arbitrary (although often politically desirable) exit strategies.

The recent two year debate without resolution on the transfer of the military peacekeeping mission to the newly founded military capabilities of the European Union has resulted in a commitment of NATO and the U.S. to an indefinite presence in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The promise of Dayton is that “when our forces depart Bosnia, they will be able to do so without fear that renewed violence threatening U.S. interests might one day require them to return.”⁹ Any total withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Bosnia, however, will likely produce chaos in the fragile nation-building process.¹⁰ The U.S. national interest in continued stability in Bosnia remains linked to successful implementation of the ways of the military and civilian articles of the Dayton Accords—the promise of a multiethnic democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina, yet to be realized.

Critics of U.S. military engagement in Bosnia focus on the limitations of the military mandate to enforce the provisions for conflict termination stipulated at Dayton. IFOR, and its successor SFOR, had limited mandates to enforce implementation of the only military article of those accords. NATO has since expanded the SFOR military mandate to actively assist implementation of the Dayton civilian articles. U.S. soldiers have become “instruments of political reform....not just guardians of public safety.”¹¹ Although critics of the expansion of the military mission term this affect “mission creep,” others refer to it as “mission shift”, aligning military tasks with changing political objectives.¹² The current mission for U.S. military support to SFOR recognizes the requirement to aid the expanded SFOR mandate to assist the Multi-Year Roadmap for civilian implementation of the Dayton Accords. Strong civilian leadership, overlapped with an aggressive military mandate, would likely have resulted in a faster tempo for joint implementation of the entire peace process.

Despite reductions over the last eight years, the U.S. military retains a significant investment in the mission in Bosnia, both in terms of funding and military manpower. The current Bush Administration has continued the mandate for U.S. forces in support of the NATO-led mission. Most recently, the President stated that, “We will not draw down our forces in Bosnia....precipitously or unilaterally. We came in together, we will go out together.”¹³ A reluctant Congress continues to fund military operations in the Balkans.¹⁴ However, like the presidential decision to send U.S. forces, sustaining their presence in Bosnia, “where thousands of Americans and other peacekeepers remain deployed, with no end in sight,”¹⁵ is not without political debate. Congress has issued several “sense of Congress” provisions that U.S. forces should not remain in Bosnia indefinitely, and that the President should work with SFOR nations to enable a U.S. withdrawal of forces.¹⁶ The continued employment of U.S. military forces is a

political commitment that they must remain in the Balkans to achieve the political objectives—to ensure the promise of Dayton—and measurably reflects the U.S. investment in peace in Bosnia.

The U.S. experience in Bosnia-Herzegovina is centered upon international civil and military cooperation. The NATO-led military coalition and U.N.-led Peace Implementation Council were founded on international legitimacy established in the Dayton Peace Accords. The subsequent U.N. Security Council Resolution and annual renewal of the mandate reinforced the consensus for NATO-led military intervention and unity of effort on the ground. The peacekeeping mission also transformed the post-Cold War NATO alliance and ensured the U.S. leadership role within NATO. NATO emerged from its experience in Bosnia with a central role in Europe as a viable alliance, willing to commit military forces to out-of-area missions. Bosnia is the catalyst that shaped the NATO alliance.¹⁷ Peacekeeping operations in Bosnia showed the Europeans that they need the United States. The Balkans experience helped NATO to overcome years of fractionalization and achieve consensus on its mission.¹⁸

The U.S. engagement in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in short, is working; it is achieving the end state of a stable multiethnic democracy, albeit much slower than the U.S. had originally anticipated. Advocates of U.S. policies point to successes in three areas with implications for post-conflict Iraq.¹⁹ First, U.S. and the European Union (E.U.) are cooperating on the ground in Bosnia. In fact, the legitimacy of the U.S. military mandate in Bosnia is derived from NATO participation, with alliance and international consensus. Second, the exit strategy, linked to measurements of effectiveness in the Multi-Year Road Map, focuses on transition of the mission to the international community, led by the E.U., and ultimately to the centralized multiethnic government of Bosnia. Finally, the restructuring and reductions in military forces, albeit with a smaller NATO or E.U.-led force, ensure continued regional stability and provide for incentives for continued factional cooperation. This strategy reflects the long-term commitment of U.S. military forces working closely with the international community as a means to achieve the political objectives.

The case study of Bosnia-Herzegovina provides three major lessons for engagement in Iraq. First, the ends of the long-term commitment as based on the national interests of the United States – to establish a multiethnic democracy in Bosnia that does not threaten regional stability. The exit strategy for military forces is a transition strategy based upon measurements of effectiveness for civil implementation. Second, the Dayton Accords and subsequent U.N. Security Council Resolutions on post-conflict Bosnia provide the ways for international implementation of the accords. Third, the NATO-led alliance and a robust international civilian effort led by the OHR provide the means and international legitimacy to the peacekeeping

mission. U.S. military actions reinforce and support international civilian implementation that will ultimately ensure that the promise of Dayton is realized. The U.S. would relearn these lessons during its second foray into military intervention in the Balkans in the Serb province of Kosovo.

THE KOSOVO EXPERIENCE

As the world watched the 1999 violence and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, the United States was reluctantly drawn into a second confrontation with Slobodan Milosevic in the Balkans.²⁰

The continued impotence of U.S. foreign policy in the Balkans demonstrated the Clinton Administration's reluctance to commit military forces. Despite two U.N. Security Council Resolutions condemning the situation in Kosovo, there was little international consensus for military intervention.²¹ Equally important, the U.S. and NATO were hesitant to enter their second conflict in the Balkans in six years without clearly defined political objectives. The United States had not learned its lessons in the ends, ways, and means of military intervention from its experience in Bosnia.

The ends of U.S. national policy in Kosovo are inextricably linked to the dual nature of the military intervention. Kosovo is actually two military interventions—the NATO air campaign to destroy Serb forces; and the subsequent NATO-led peacekeeping operation, the Kosovo Force (KFOR). During the NATO air campaign, President Clinton outlined the U.S. national objectives; “Our mission is clear: to demonstrate the seriousness of NATO’s purpose so that the Serbian leaders understand the imperative of reversing course; to deter an even bloodier offensive against innocent civilians in Kosovo, and, if necessary to seriously damage the Serbian military’s capacity to harm the people of Kosovo.”²²

At the conclusion of the NATO air campaign, President Clinton committed military forces as part of the NATO-led peacekeeping force. U.S national objectives in the peacekeeping mission were: 1) insure the Serbs keep their commitments; 2) reduce the risks in bringing home refugees; and 3) achieve the broader challenge of preventing future crises by promoting democracy and prosperity in the region.²³ President George W. Bush has continued the deployment of military forces to the NATO-led KFOR, declaring that the mission is in support of vital interests of the United States.²⁴ The continued U.S. participation in military peacekeeping operations in Kosovo is strategically linked to the enduring NATO commitment to peace in the region.²⁵

As they did four years before at Dayton, the U.S. and NATO were determined to achieve a political settlement from the warring factions and a written mandate as the roadmap or ways to end the war in Kosovo. Unfortunately, the roadmap to peace in Kosovo was a significantly more

complicated process. Despite the indecision of the Clinton Administration and internal debate within NATO over the use of military force, the Contact Group (the U.S., U.K., Italy, France, Germany, and Russia) drew the Serbs to the peace table with threats of airstrikes. Weeks of negotiations at Rambouillet and the threat of NATO airstrikes resulted in only the Kosovar Albanians signing the peace agreement. The Rambouillet agreement was “dead on arrival” due to the Serb refusal to sign.²⁶ NATO air strikes against Serb forces, with the concomitant response by Milosevic to increase the pace of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, ensured that Kosovar Albanians would not settle for an autonomous state within Serbia. The NATO air campaign cemented the failure of Rambouillet and left unresolved the issues of conflict termination by reinforcing the quest for Kosovar independence.

Unlike previous military intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina, conflict termination remained an elusive goal for NATO-led military forces in Kosovo. After more than a month of bombing Serbia, NATO was still debating the conflict termination objectives.²⁷ Under such circumstances, as NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander pointed out, end states and political objectives can change, particularly if there is no clear consensus.²⁸ Milosevic finally relented and the Serb Army signed the Military Technical Agreement (MTA), withdrawing Serb Army and paramilitary forces. The U.S. and NATO later received concessions to demilitarize the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). With the *de facto* peace settlement in hand, the U.N. Security Council acted to legitimize international military intervention with the appropriate resolution (UNSCR 1244).

Despite the lack of a clear conflict termination document such as the Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia, UNSCR 1244 provides an effective roadmap or way for the international community in post-conflict Kosovo. The resolution grants legitimacy to the deployment of a NATO-led security presence in Kosovo to ensure the withdrawal of Serb armed forces from Kosovo, the demilitarization of the KLA, and the maintenance of the cease-fire. Moreover, the UNSCR assigns the U.N. Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) the lead role in administering Kosovo on a provisional basis. The UNMIK mandate is broad and sweeping, demonstrating unity of both civil and military effort under U.N.-led civilian leadership.²⁹ UNMIK is organized under a four pillar structure with UNMIK, OSCE, and the European Union each leading pillars for civil implementation. However, UNSCR 1244 and the ambiguous U.S. policy do not resolve the final status of Kosovo—whether that beleaguered country will achieve independence or remain a province of Serbia. The former head of UNMIK, Michael Steiner, established a series of benchmarks or measurements of effectiveness for achieving international expectations of the Kosovar government and society prior to discussions on the final status of Kosovo.³⁰ Steiner

termed these benchmarks “standards before status”, and they have been internationally recognized as the political objectives for transition of the UNMIK mission to the Kosovar government. NATO-led KFOR force reductions and exit strategies are linked to the UNMIK concept of benchmarks for civil and military implementation. This is a key strategic lesson learned from the U.S. experience in Kosovo for both civil and military implementation of the UNSCR and peace documents.

Reflecting on the lessons of Bosnia, the NATO-led military forces in Kosovo have a robust mandate to support UNMIK civil implementation efforts. The KFOR mandate, while in direct support of the MTA and the KLA demilitarization agreement, complements the pillars of civil implementation. Finally, UNSCR 1244 provides the NATO-led KFOR with a clear mandate and mission.³¹ As in the previous military intervention in Balkans, critics of the pace or tempo of implementation of the agreements point to a limited military mandate that frustrates international civilian implementation efforts.

The presidential decision to commit U.S. military forces to war in Kosovo was controversial. The Clinton Administration’s perception was that neither American vital interests nor European security were at stake in Kosovo.³² On the evening of NATO bombing, President Clinton reported; “I do not intend to put out troops in Kosovo to fight a war.”³³ That statement was a critical mistake, demonstrating to NATO allies and the world that the United States was willing to go to war to end Milosevic’s ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians, but not at the risk of U.S. soldiers.³⁴ The presidential decision to employ coercive NATO air power as the limited military means to achieve the failed political objectives of Rambouillet was a selection of military means incompatible with the political objectives.³⁵ The NATO commander during the Kosovo campaign views White House reluctance to enter into a ground campaign as an “emerging pattern” of modern war, in which political factors are dominant in Washington and there is the perception of congressional oversight of strategic plans for war.³⁶ The initial result in Kosovo was a limited air campaign with targets chosen by NATO-consensus with intensive White House oversight.

In contrast to the air war, the post-conflict phase in Kosovo has been less controversial. The U.S. military presence in Kosovo, like that in Bosnia, is in support of a NATO-led military coalition. The size of the U.S. military force reflects the Clinton and subsequent Bush Administration’s policy that the U.S. and European Union would work together to rebuild Kosovo but that “Europe must provide most of the resources.”³⁷ The U.S. contributes only approximately 15% of the total international military force in Kosovo. Continued U.S. participation in peacekeeping operations in Kosovo is not without significant debate over the

lack of a defined exit strategy and the nature of the open-ended military commitment. Congressional dissent over the commitment focused on “NATO taking the same, failed, approach towards Kosovo where KFOR troops have begun to dig in for the long-haul.”³⁸ Most significantly, there is growing congressional interest in “finishing the job,” forcing an eventual exit strategy for the U.S. military, and increasing civil commitment to the international effort in Kosovo.³⁹ President Bush links participation in the NATO mission in Kosovo with the policy of “standards before status,” applying the UNMIK benchmarks to the transition of authority from the international intervention to the Kosovar people. In a statutory report to Congress, Bush wrote, “I anticipate that the Kosovo force—and U.S. participation in it—will gradually reduce in size as public security conditions improve and Kosovars assume increasing responsibility for their own self-government.”⁴⁰ The exit strategy for U.S. military forces is strategically linked to achievement of UNMIK-established benchmarks. This is a critical lesson of the U.S. experience in Kosovo.

Significantly different than Bosnia, success of the international mandate in Kosovo rests upon the final question of future independence of Kosovo from Serbia. The current internationally recognized policy of “standards before status” provides a roadmap for peace, but likely only defers the decision and corresponding potential for renewed violence until a later date. There is a very real risk of losing the peace in Kosovo. Scholarly debate focuses on whether NATO’s largest-ever military intervention is creating a “new Kosovo” that is the opposite of the alliance’s stated goals. Ethnic violence, crime, and corruption threaten the fragile peace. Porous borders and Kosovar criminal syndicates expose Europe to drugs, violence, and terrorism.⁴¹ The U.S and international community cannot afford to fail in Kosovo. The investment in peace in terms of military forces and funding challenges the United States to continue the mission in Kosovo until achievement of political objectives. The risks of a premature exit strategy or failed engagement could expand sanctuaries for global terrorism that could directly threaten the security of the United States.

The case study of Kosovo provides four major lessons for U.S. engagement in Iraq. First, like earlier intervention in Bosnia, the ends of military intervention lie with a transition to other organizations that can achieve benchmarks linked to strategic ends – to establish a multiethnic democracy in Kosovo that does not threaten regional stability. Unlike Bosnia, the final status of Kosovo remains the divisive issue on achieving the political ends of intervention. Second, UNSCR 1244 and other peace documents provide a clear mandate for post-conflict Kosovo and establish the ways for both civil and military implementation under UNMIK. Also unlike Bosnia, the clear mandate of UNMIK to coordinate both military and civilian implementation provides for

greater unity of effort and a higher tempo of implementation. Third, the NATO-led alliance provides international legitimacy and burden sharing, particularly with reduced U.S. military forces. Finally, the unresolved issue of the final status of Kosovo may cause the entire peacekeeping effort to fail and the province to once again erupt into war.

THE POST-CONFLICT IRAQ EXPERIENCE

"The work of building a new Iraq is hard, and it is right," President Bush emphasized in his 2004 State of the Union Address, "and America has always been willing to do what it takes for what is right."⁴² The Bush Administration's endstate for post-conflict Iraq is well documented. Although not clearly articulated at the beginning of the conflict, the United States strategic objective for post-conflict Iraq is a stable multi-ethnic democracy. In a November 2003 speech, for instance, the President issued a new national policy that called for the democratization of the Middle East.⁴³

Securing democracy in Iraq is the work of many hands. American and coalition forces are sacrificing for the peace of Iraq and for the security of free nations ... This is a massive and difficult undertaking -- it is worth our effort, it is worth our sacrifice, because we know the stakes. The failure of Iraqi democracy would embolden terrorists around the world, increase dangers to the American people, and extinguish the hopes of millions in the region. Iraqi democracy will succeed -- and that success will send forth the news, from Damascus to Teheran -- that freedom can be the future of every nation. The establishment of a free Iraq at the heart of the Middle East will be a watershed event in the global democratic revolution.⁴⁴

And during recent congressional testimony, the head of the Office of Coalition Provisional Authority (OCPA), L. Paul Bremmer, described the danger of failing to achieve a stable and democratic Iraq as a direct threat to the security of the United States. "Either outcome (state-sponsored terrorism or terrorists in failed nation-states), or some combination of both," he concluded, "is possible in Iraq if we do not follow up on our military victory with the wherewithal to win the peace."⁴⁵

The U.S. must synchronize all elements of national power in Iraq while the U.S. military focuses on security and humanitarian missions. Ambassador Bremmer has evoked paradigms of the Marshal Plan of 1948 for focusing U.S. and international aid to create a "stable, peaceful, economically productive Iraq that will serve American interests by making America safer."⁴⁶ But in post-conflict Iraq, the question remains concerning the U.S. exit strategy. Some analysts posit that the exit strategy will be contentious to draft or execute, since it will require the establishment of political stability, which is difficult to achieve given the fractionalization of Iraq's population, weak political institutions, and the propensity for violence.⁴⁷ In any event, given the

Balkan experience, the strategy must be tied to measurements of effectiveness or benchmarks of success for the transition of responsibilities from the coalition peacekeeping force to an international organization or to the Interim-Iraqi government.

Unlike the experience of the U.S. in the Balkans, the coalition of the willing did not have a conflict termination document or subsequent U.N. Security Council Resolution to provide the ways for the post-conflict mandate. At the conclusion of combat operations in Iraq, there was no surrender document from the Iraqi military; no Dayton Peace Accords to guide the peacekeeping mandate; and no MTA or Demilitarization Agreement to regulate the conduct of the former warring armies. Critics were quick to point out that military victory does not always equate to political victory—that in the haste of coalition forces to seize Baghdad and cause the collapse of the Ba’athist regime, the U.S. and its allies did not have strategic plans for the often-blurred transition from combat operations to peacekeeping. Others argued that the nature of the transformed U.S. military fight involving a rapid defeat of the enemy directly resulted in not having adequate forces or the right skill sets available to control the looting and insurgent violence that immediately followed the liberation of Iraq.⁴⁸ Peacekeeping occurred simultaneously with combat operations, further blurring the transition. In congressional testimony, the Commander of U.S. Central Command addressed the question of conflict termination in Iraq: “I think in a war and in post-conflict, one never knows exactly how to gage what may be expected in the aftermath of major combat.”⁴⁹ That notwithstanding, as the U.S. experience in the Balkans repeatedly demonstrated, without a focused planning effort on the post-conflict stage, it is always extremely difficult for military means to achieve the strategic results. Military victory, Anthony Cordesman has pointed out in this regard, has always been a “prelude to a much more important struggle—winning the peace.”⁵⁰

The Bush Administration failed to achieve international consensus or a viable coalition for implementation of post-conflict operations. As the direct result of the failure to achieve consensus for a U.N. Security Council Resolution supporting coalition military action against Iraq, U.S. military forces do not have the full support, or legitimacy, afforded by international or at least great power consensus. Reflecting on the success of Operation Desert Storm, former-president George H.W. Bush remarked, “We could have acted unilaterally to defeat and reverse Iraqi aggression in the sense that we had the military wherewithal to do most of the job ourselves...It was clear, however, that both the immediate situation and the aftermath of the war would benefit immensely if we acted as part of an international coalition.”⁵¹ It was a lesson not lost on the NATO Commander in the Balkans.

When it can, the United States will use military power in conjunction with its friends and allies. It is a matter of distributing the risks and burdens of military action, as well as essential access and support. And in the case of allied action, the United States will have to recognize that its own national interests will seldom be the same in nature, intensity, scope or duration as those of its allies and partners.⁵²

As it did during military operations in the Balkans, the U.S. would significantly benefit from a strong international civil mandate, led by the U.N., and from an equally strong military mandate, led by a NATO coalition in support of post-conflict peacekeeping operations in Iraq.

The Bush Administration has also been faulted for failing to adequately plan for the use of military means to ensure stability and conduct nation-building in post-conflict in Iraq. Much of the criticism has focused on the reported schism between Departments of Defense and State planning and the failure of the interagency process at the highest levels, to include the National Security Council. For example, the State Department's Future of Iraq Project began post-conflict planning over a year before the invasion of Iraq. During that time, the organization provided the U.S. government a very good idea of what could be expected in post-conflict Iraq.⁵³ On the other hand, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz testified before Congress, "despite claims that there were no plans for peace operations in the wake of military operations, Presidential Envoy Bremmer and Jay Garner are implementing plans drawn up long before the war to strengthen and rebuild Iraq."⁵⁴ Mr. Wolfowitz concluded that, "we are still fighting a war at the same time that we are struggling to win the peace...transforming Iraq will not be quick or easy."⁵⁵ In any case, most analysts reflecting on the war in Iraq would agree with a recent report that concluded: "One clear lesson is the importance of pre-conflict planning, preparation, communication, and coordination."⁵⁶

The use of U.S. military forces for post-conflict nation-building has remained a divisive issue for the Bush Administration. Instead of fostering interagency cooperation for post-conflict Iraq planning, President Bush ceded total control of post-conflict Iraq to the Department of Defense.⁵⁷ That was a grave mistake. What has emerged from the U.S. experience in Iraq is the absolute necessity for detailed interagency planning for post-conflict operations prior to hostilities in order to achieve successful endstates and handover the mission from military to civilian responsibility. Unless reversed by future interagency cooperation, the Bush Administrations' failure to conduct interagency planning for post-conflict operations will result in failure to develop an effective transition strategy from military rule to an Iraqi multiethnic democracy.

CONCLUSIONS

The United States has now made a tremendous investment in Iraq—investment in every case. Policy investment, personnel investment, financial investment. So how this plays out will also have a big impact on how [the] world perceives the United States and it will probably also have a big, big impact on how Americans perceive their foreign policy.

—Richard Haas, Director of Policy Planning, U.S.
State Department, 15 September 2003

The dangers of losing the peace in Iraq are real. The United States experience in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo demonstrate three key lessons for direct application to the mission in post-conflict Iraq. First, the U.S. cannot rely solely upon its military to achieve the strategic ends of a stable democratic Iraq—an increasing trend as one analyst has pointed out: “U.S. leaders have been turning more and more to the military to solve problems that are often, at their root, political and economic.”⁵⁸ Ambassador Bremmer has acknowledged this by evoking paradigms of the Marshal Plan to create a “stable, peaceful, economically productive Iraq [that] will serve American interests by making America safer.”⁵⁹ In order for the paradigms to work, however, the U.S. experience in the Balkans clearly demonstrates the necessity of making an effective transition to an international or host-nation civilian capability. The transition strategy for Iraq will be contentious to draft or execute, since it will require the establishment of political stability.⁶⁰ The Balkan experience also demonstrates that this type of strategy must be tied to benchmarks of success of civil implementation. New efforts in interagency planning for post-conflict Iraq are required to rapidly fuse the synergy of national and coalition efforts to address the benchmarks of success. From this perspective, the Balkans provide a useable paradigm for strategic linkages between military force structures, mandates, measurements of success, and transition strategies.

Second, the U.S. and coalition forces must demand a conflict termination document that reflects the role of the U.N. and other civil implementation structures, as well as a strong mandate for coalition military forces in support of the overarching civil implementation effort. The document must provide clear benchmarks for achievement of the measurements of effectiveness that provide specific transitions for the mission to the Iraqi government and people. At the same time, the U.S. and its coalition partners must clearly define the mandate for military and civil implementation of a U.N.-sponsored peace plan, similar to the Dayton Accords in Bosnia and UNSCR 1244 in Kosovo. The U.S. experience in conflict termination in the Balkans provides a useful paradigm for drafting an international mandate for military peacekeeping and civil implementation in post-conflict Iraq.

Third, the U.S. must internationalize the military mission in Iraq and expand the coalition. The transition of the coalition military mission to a NATO-led peacekeeping mission will result in nations having a greater share in the eventual success of the mission and will broaden the base for international support and legitimacy. This, in turn, creates the potential for expanding the participation of nations in civil implementation. A NATO-led international military peacekeeping mission may also reduce insurgent activity currently focused against U.S. and coalition occupation forces. In short, just as in peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, the U.S. would benefit from a NATO-led coalition in post-conflict peacekeeping operations in Iraq.

The United States may very well have entered the chaotic post-conflict environment in Iraq ignoring Clausewitz's warning of not entering into a war without first knowing what the political ends of intervention are and how to achieve them. But the die has been cast, and the United States must persevere in its post-conflict efforts. The Balkans provide a useful paradigm for examining the ends, ways, and means of U.S. military intervention to achieve a stable, multiethnic democracy in a post-conflict nation-state. Military means alone have not achieved the political ends in the Balkans nor will they in Iraq. The national strategy for Iraq must ensure the strategic linkage between the elements of national power, the "means" of U.S. involvement in post-conflict in Iraq, with the "ends" of the establishment of a free Iraq in the heart of the Middle East. Only in this way can the United States win the peace. "In Iraq we must succeed," Zbigniew Brzezinski points out. "Failure is not an option."⁶¹

WORD COUNT=5,972

ENDNOTES

¹ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and trans .Michael Howard and Peter Paret. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 579.

² Richard Holbrooke, *To End A War* (New York: Random House), 21.

³ William T. Johnsen, *U.S. Participation in IFOR: A Marathon, not a Sprint* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1996), 1. Manfred Rotermond, in *The Fog of Peace: Finding the End-State of Hostilities* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1999), 53; suggests that U.S. military intervention in the Balkans must establish "something beyond the *status quo ante*....the goal has been to establish democracy." An April 2000 Government Accounting Report, *Balkans Security: Current and Projected Factors Affecting Regional Stability* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, April 2000), reaffirms the U.S. political objective of creating a unified, multiethnic democratic Bosnia.

⁴ Richard Holbrooke, *To End A War* (New York: Random House, 1998), 16.

⁵ Steven J. Woehrel and Julie Kim, *Kosovo and U.S. Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, July 18, 2003), 16-17. Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz stated that peacekeeping in the Balkans continues to be an important mission to the U.S. and NATO and that "the last thing anyone wants to see in the light of September 11th is to have a failed state here in the heart of Europe."

⁶ Carl Bildt, quoted in Holbrooke, 362.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ David Halberstram, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals* (New York: Scribner, 2001), 358.

⁹ Madeleine K. Albright, *Remarks at Annual Fleet Week Gala, Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, May 22, 1997)

¹⁰ Gideon Rose, "The Exit Strategy Delusion: Strategic Vogue," *Foreign Affairs* 77, (January/February 1998), 61. The withdrawal of U.S. forces from Bosnia-Herzegovina is likely to produce chaos on the ground unless one of the three following alternatives is implemented: the assignment of a follow-on-force, the development of a single competent local political entity in Bosnia-Herzegovina, or the achievement of a clear division and stable balance of power among the three ethnic factions.

¹¹ Dana Priest, *The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003), 259.

¹² Anthony Zinni, "Twenty Lessons Learned for Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations," in *Military Support to Complex Humanitarian Emergencies: From Practice to Policy*, by the Center for Naval Analysis (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analysis, 1995); available from <<http://www.cna.org/pdfs/95conf.pdf>>; Internet; accessed 18 December 2003.

¹³ Ibid, 16.

¹⁴ Steven R. Bowman, *Bosnia: US Military Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 13 November 2001), 6.

¹⁵ Kay Bailey Hutchinson, "Back to the Balkan Drawing Board," *The Financial Times*, 16 March 2000; available from <<http://hutchinson.senate.gov/balkans/htm>>; Internet; accessed 12 November 2003.

¹⁶ Bowman, 5.

¹⁷ Joyce P. Kaufman, *NATO and the Former Yugoslavia: Crisis, Conflict, and the Atlantic Alliance* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002), 138 and 129.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ John R. Lampe, "The Lessons of Bosnia and Kosovo for Iraq," *Current History* (March 2004), 114.

²⁰ Halberstram, 411.

²¹ Ronald Scott Mangum, "NATO's Attack on Serbia: Anomaly or Emerging Doctrine?" *Parameters* 41, (Winter 2000-2001), available from <<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/00winter/mangum.htm>>; Internet, accessed on 6 January 2004. The United Nations Security Council Resolutions: 1160 and 1199.

²² William J. Clinton, *Address to the Nation on Airstrikes against Serbian Targets in the FRY*, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 26 March 1999); available from <<http://frwebgate4.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/waisgate.cgi?WaisdocID=41077128739+6+0+0>>; Internet; accessed on 6 January 2004.

²³ William J. Clinton, *Remarks on the Military Technical Agreement on Kosovo and an Exchange with Reporters*, (Washington, D.C., The White House, 10 June 1999); available from <<http://frwebgate6.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/waisgate.cgi?WaisdocID=410229123767+19+0>>; Internet; accessed 6 January 2004.

²⁴ George W. Bush, *Message to Congress Transmitting a Report on Achieving Militarily Significant Benchmarks for a Sustainable Peace in Kosovo* (Washington, D.C., The White House, 31 January 2003); available from <<http://frwebgate5.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/>>; Internet; accessed on 6 January 2004.

²⁵ Woehrel, 16.

²⁶ Jeffrey Record, *Serbia and Vietnam: A Preliminary Comparison of U.S. Decisions to Use Force*, (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Center for Strategy and Technology, Air War College, May 1999), 16.

²⁷ William Flavin, "Planning for Conflict Termination and Post-Conflict Success," *Parameters* 33, (Autumn 2003), 100.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Woehrel, 9-10. UNMIK duties include performing basic civil administration of the province; maintaining law and order; including setting up an international police force and creating local police forces; supporting humanitarian aid efforts; facilitating the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes; protecting human rights; supporting the reconstruction effort; preparing the way for elections and the creation of self-government institutions; and facilitating a political process to address Kosovo's final status.

³⁰ Ibid, 7.

³¹ Ibid. The mandate of the KFOR mission is to: 1) to monitor, verify, and enforce the provisions of the MTA and KLA Demilitarization Agreements; 2) in support of UNMIK and the civilian mandate in Kosovo, KFOR maintains a secure environment, supports public safety and order; and 3) provide support to UNMIK and non-governmental agencies within its capabilities

³² Earl H. Tilford, "Operation Allied Force and the Role of Air Power," *Parameters* 29 (Winter 1999-2000), 27.

³³ Halberstram, 423.

³⁴ Ibid, 424. David Halberstram wrote of that one sentence: "It was the compromise of all compromises. It would be hard, six years into the Clinton presidency, to think of a sentence more important in the bureaucracy. It summed up with surprising accuracy all the contradictions and the ambivalence of America as a post-Cold War superpower....Did we need to rally our people as we fought?"

³⁵ Record, iii.

³⁶ Wesley Clark, *Waging Modern War* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), 438-440.

³⁷ Woehrel, 16.

³⁸ Hutchinson.

³⁹ Woehrel, 2.

⁴⁰ George W. Bush, *Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Achieving Militarily Significant Benchmarks for a Sustainable Peace in Kosovo* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 31 January 2003)

⁴¹ James C. O'Brien, *Testimony before Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on European Affairs*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Senate; 25 June 2003), available from <<http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2003/OBrienTestimony030625.pdf>>; Internet; accessed 18 December 2003.

⁴² George W. Bush, *State of the Union Address* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 20 January 2004); available from <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/01>>; Internet; accessed 6 February 2004.

⁴³ George W. Bush, *Remarks by the President at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy, United States Chamber of Commerce*, (Washington, D.C.: The

White House, 6 November 2003); available from <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html>>; Internet, accessed 8 February 2004.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Bremmer.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Conrad C. Crane and W. Andrew Terrill, *Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2003), 1.

⁴⁸ Hans Binnendijk and Stuart Johnson, eds., *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Technology and National Security Policy, National Defense University, 15 December 2003), 5.

⁴⁹ Tommy Franks, *Testimony as Delivered by the Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld*, (Washington, D.C.: Senate Armed Services Committee, 9 July 2003); available from <<http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2003/sp2003/sp20030709-secdef0364.html>>; Internet; accessed 18 December 2003.

⁵⁰ Anthony Cordesman, *The Iraq War: Strategy, Tactics, and Military Lessons* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2003), 144.

⁵¹ George H.W. Bush, "American Leadership and the Prevention of Deadly Conflict," in *Essays on Leadership*, by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, 1998); available from <<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/subsites/ccpdc/pubs/essays/esfr.htm>>; Internet; accessed 18 December 2003.

⁵² Clark, 13.

⁵³ James Fallows, "Blind into Baghdad," *The Atlantic Monthly*, January/February 2004, 56.

⁵⁴ Paul Wolfowitz, *Testimony on Iraq* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 22 May, 2003); available from <<http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2003/sp20030522-depsecdef0223.html>>; Internet; accessed 18 December 2003.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Frederick D. Barton and Bathsheba N. Crocker, *A Wiser Peace: An Action Strategy for a Post-Conflict Iraq* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 2003), 26.

⁵⁷ George Packer, "Letter from Baghdad," *The New Yorker*, Issue 2003-11-124, 5; available from <<http://www.newyorker.com>>; Internet; accessed 16 January 2004.

⁵⁸ Priest, 11.

⁵⁹ Bremmer.

⁶⁰ Crane, 1.

⁶¹ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *New American Strategies for Security and Peace* (Washington, D.C.: Verbatim transcript of speech given without written text, 28 October 2003); available from <<http://www.newamericanstrategies.org/transcripts/brzezski.pdf>>; Internet, accessed 16 January 2004.

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